

## Thinking about adopting a child through DCFS?

Over the last decade, more than 15,000 children got the chance they deserve to love and be loved, and to reach their fullest potential thanks to families across our state that chose to adopt through DCFS. By providing a child with a loving and permanent home, adoptive families have discovered the unique joy of making a life-changing difference to a child. It is a feeling you can't get any other way.



At the same time, the decision to add a child to your family is serious and life changing. We want to help you make sure that opening your heart and your life to a child is the right decision for the child and your family. If you choose to adopt, DCFS and our nonprofit partners are committed to providing your new family with the help you need. With that focus in mind, we hope the following information will help you make the important decision about whether to open your heart, your family and your life to a child (or children) who need a loving and nurturing environment.

### **How long does the adoption process take to complete?**

After an initial screening which includes a visit to your home, the first step is becoming licensed as foster parent so that children can be placed with your family. Licensing typically takes one to two months, and after that we work with you as quickly as possible to match siblings or a single child to your current family. Once a placement has been made, adoptions are typically approved by the department and the courts after six months.

### **What are the requirements of adoptive parents?**

There is not a list of specific requirements. Most people who can provide an adequate and loving home are eligible to adopt.

As an adoptive parent, you:

- May be single, married, in a civil union, divorced or separated;
- May or may not already be a parent;
- Must be able to financially manage the addition of a child or children to the family, although there are no specific income requirements;
- Must have room in your home, but you do not have to own a home.

### **What kind of training is required?**

Families wishing to adopt initially participate in a 27-hour training to become fully-licensed foster families. After being matched with a child, the family will complete a nine-hour training focusing on adoption and the adoption process and an individualized training program to provide them with the information, training and tools they need to be the best possible parents to the child.

### **Are there any training or support services after the adoption?**

Yes. After the adoption is finalized there are post adoption services and resources to support adoptive families. These include support groups, counseling, ongoing training opportunities, search and reunion services and a toll-free information and referral line.

### **Will the child's birth parents be involved in our lives after the adoption?**

The birth parents' rights are legally terminated prior to the adoption. Therefore, the birth parents have no legal rights to the child. Any further contact between birth parents and the child is up to you, as the child's adoptive parents. However, adoptive parents should realize that connections to other birth relatives are very important to many adopted children. That is especially true of siblings, which is why we make every effort to place brothers and sisters in the same permanent, loving home. When that's not possible, your caseworker will work with you and your adopted child to develop a plan to sustain relationships that are key to your child's best interests.

### **How much does it cost to adopt?**

DCFS is committed to ensuring a smooth transition as you grow your family through adoption, and a range of supports are available to families, including:

- Reimbursement for costs associated with the adoption or guardianship, such as attorney fees and court costs;
- Continued support of the child's basic needs like food and clothing through monthly adoption subsidies;
- Supplemental assistance with health care needs through enrollment in Medicaid;
- Support groups, counseling, ongoing training;
- Counseling services for the family and child, if needed;
- Therapeutic day care.



*For more information about children in need of a loving family, please call the Adoption Information Center of Illinois (AICI) at 800-572-2390 or visit [www.adoptinfo-il.org](http://www.adoptinfo-il.org).*